



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

ROOTS AND FUTURES

Exploring the roots of communities
old and new in North Sheffield

WELCOME TO THE ROOTS AND FUTURES PROJECT

Roots and Futures is a collaboration between archaeologists at the University of Sheffield, community-based organisations Zest and KINCA, Kelham Island Museum, and heritage consultants at Ecus. The project explores the links between history, place and health and wellbeing by supporting and empowering local people to share their memories of Upperthorpe, Netherthorpe, Neepsend and Kelham Island, places that we refer to collectively throughout the report as 'North Sheffield'. Through their stories, Roots and Futures sheds light on the aspects of archaeology and history that are most important and meaningful to communities today.

The project is an example of direct engagement with people in North Sheffield. It began in Spring 2020 with the creation of the Roots and Futures app, which invited users to add stories about their favourite places to an interactive map of North Sheffield. Over Summer 2021, we have spoken in-depth with local people about their engagement with the past in a series of consultation activities. The Roots and Futures blog has recorded our progress along the way. To access the blog, visit: <https://sites.google.com/sheffield.ac.uk/roots-and-futures/home>

This report documents our exciting findings so far and their implications for future heritage work with communities in Sheffield and beyond.

It highlights the community-expressed need for:

- Taking a place-based approach that utilises outdoor activities to bring heritage, and its attendant health and wellbeing benefits, to local communities.
- Highlighting social and cultural histories to tell more personalised and diverse stories of Sheffield's past.
- Adopting creative approaches to engaging with the past through oral histories, material culture and heritage trails of historic buildings and landscapes.

Partnership work

One of the key strengths of Roots and Futures is its commitment to cultivating mutually beneficial connections between the University and community organisations. Our partners have been involved in every step of the project's design, from our approach to consultation with local people, to the content and presentation of this report. By modelling new and innovative approaches to co-production, Roots and Futures provides a blueprint for future collaborations between the University and community organisations.

Investment

The Roots and Futures consultations, blog, and report were funded by the National Productivity Investment Fund. The Higher Education Innovation Fund financed the development of the Roots and Futures app and the translation of project materials into Arabic.

Scan this QR code to access the Roots and Futures blog.



For more information about the project, please contact the team at:
rootsandfutures@sheffield.ac.uk

The digital version of this report in English can be found at:
www.sheffield.ac.uk/archaeology/research/roots-and-futures

لطلب الترجمة العربية لهذا التقرير، يُرجى مراسلة الفريق على البريد الإلكتروني المذكور أدناه
rootsandfutures@sheffield.ac.uk

يمكن الحصول على النسخة الرقمية من هذا التقرير باللغة العربية على
www.sheffield.ac.uk/archaeology/research/roots-and-futures

THE ROOTS AND FUTURES TEAM



The Department of Archaeology is part of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Sheffield. The Department is committed to creating partnerships with global organisations as well as local communities to produce world-leading research which has a lasting impact.



Zest is a community anchor organisation with a centre based in Upperthorpe. It delivers personalised support to members of the community to address local inequalities such as health and wellbeing, employment and skills, and sport, leisure, and recreation.



Ecus Ltd is an environmental organisation founded in Sheffield that develops heritage solutions to protect historic landscapes and artefacts for the future. Its mission is to create sustainable solutions to development through collaboration and consultation with communities.

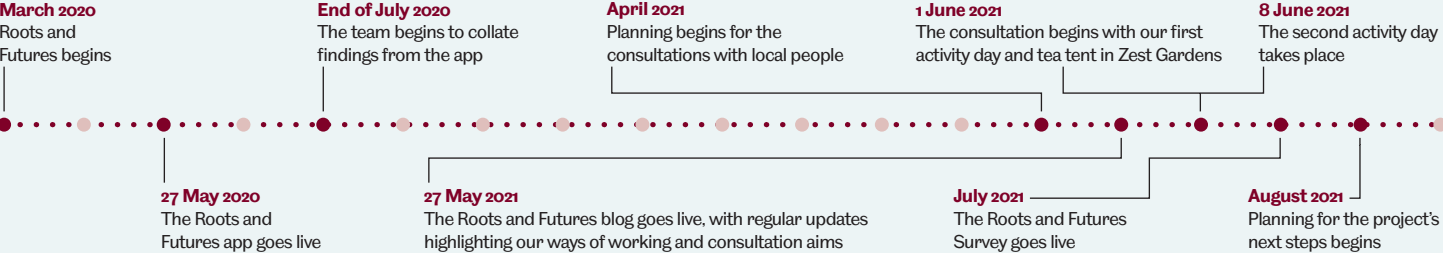


Kelham Island & Neepsend Community Alliance is a charity created by local people to strengthen their growing and diverse community by acting as a forum for local issues and organising community activities.



Kelham Island Museum is part of Sheffield Museums Trust, the independent charity that operates six of the city's leading museums and heritage sites, which also include Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet, Graves Gallery, Millennium Gallery, Shepherd Wheel and Weston Park Museum. Established in 2021, the charity cares for the city's collections of art, human and industrial history, and natural science, alongside the Guild of St George's John Ruskin collection and the Ken Hawley Collection Trust's Hawley Tool Collection.

THE PROJECT TIMELINE



Roots and Futures began in Spring 2020 as an investigation into how the people of North Sheffield interacted with the area's built and archaeological heritage. When the pandemic restricted plans to consult communities in person, the project pivoted to designing a web-based app that enabled local people to explore the stories of the buildings and historic landscapes around them. Through the app, users could follow a Historic Buildings Trail and explore the findings of local archaeological excavations, but its most interactive element was the 'Your Sheffield' map, which led to users sharing their photographs and memories of their favourite places.

Contributions to the map offered insights into personal perspectives of 'heritage'. For some people, it had close links to Sheffield's industrial past and the area's built environment. For others, it sparked memories of family weddings, street parades, and playing together as children amongst areas of back-to-back housing. Through the app, we gained a much more intimate picture of what 'heritage' means to local people.

Another key finding was the therapeutic benefits associated with place-based heritage engagement. Users, who tended to be older people, found that the app helped them to feel connected to their local area.

During Summer 2021, Roots and Futures has built on these findings, extending our exploration of the health and wellbeing benefits of the project through a series of consultation activities with older people and people of colour. By taking the lead from local people, the project has continued to empower communities to engage with history, with a view to shaping future heritage strategies based on their perspectives.

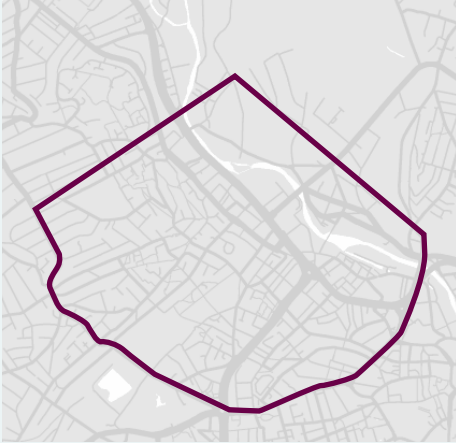
OUR AREA OF FOCUS IN NORTH SHEFFIELD

Kelham Island

Kelham Island is home to a relatively new community. The area has strong industrial roots, its factories and workshops having driven Sheffield's steel production from the early nineteenth century until the 1990s. More recently, it has become an increasingly popular area to live and work, but the arrival of new apartment blocks and businesses could threaten the development of a shared sense of identity among residents. At the start of Roots and Futures, KINCA identified the need to strengthen feelings of belonging and ownership over spaces as critical to bringing people together, especially considering the area's lack of indoor and outdoor community amenities. Roots and Futures takes important steps towards these aims, uncovering the area's rich history to reinforce past and present connections between communities and the places they call home.

Netherthorpe, Upperthorpe and Neepsend

Netherthorpe, Upperthorpe and Neepsend are some of the most diverse neighbourhoods in Sheffield, with a Black, Asian and minority ethnic population of 31.9%. Parts of the community sit within the 10% most deprived areas in the country. Before the project began, Zest had identified a sense of disconnect between local communities and understandings of shared heritage in Sheffield. Although people wanted to learn more about their neighbourhoods, diverse communities struggled to find reflections of their cultural and migration histories in stories about Sheffield's past. The last seventeen months have only made resolving this disconnection more important. As communities in these neighbourhoods face increasing levels of isolation and mental health issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Roots and Futures has been well-placed to bring the health and wellbeing benefits associated with place-based heritage projects to all members of the community.



Photographs

1. The back of Netherthorpe School in the late 1950s, shared by a user of the Roots and Futures app.
2. The junction of Burlington Street and Addy Street in Upperthorpe, 1959. Picture Sheffield reference: S12875.

THE ROOTS AND FUTURES APP STATISTICS

1,078 unique users in **14** different countries between May and July 2020

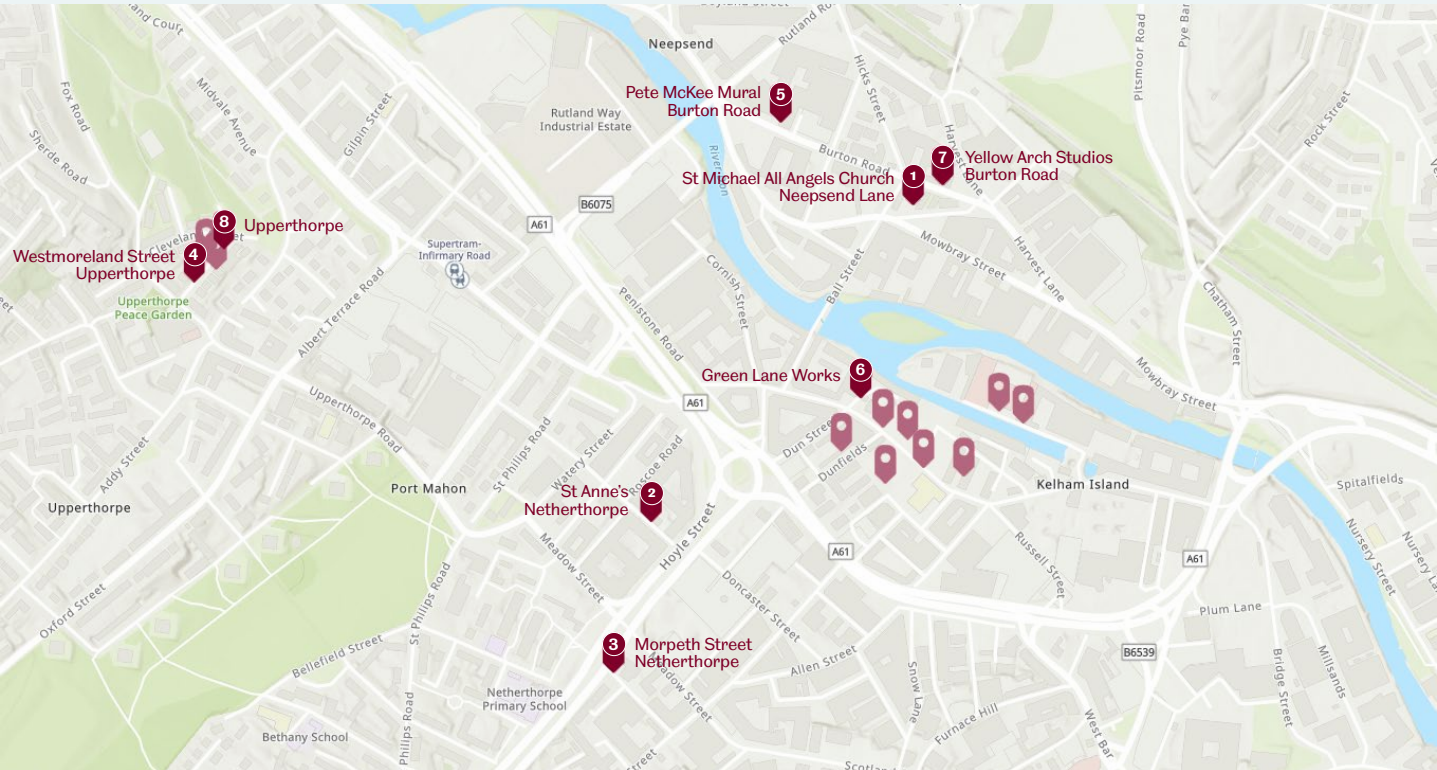
86% of users were new visitors and **14%** were returning visitors

20 users shared their stories and photographs **55** historic buildings and **44** sites of archaeological excavation mapped on our digital trails



Scan this QR code to access the Roots and Futures app.

YOUR SHEFFIELD MAP



1. A family wedding at St Michael All Angel
I only discovered this picture about 5 years ago of a family wedding at St Michael All Angels Church Neepsend Lane. I believe the date is 1938!



2. Parade!
Church parade, St Anne's, Netherthorpe.



3. Morpeth Street, Netherthorpe
Check out St Vincent's church in the background.



4. Westmoreland Street, Upperthorpe
Happy family memories at Christmas in Netherthorpe.



5. Pete McKee's artwork, Burton Road
Pete McKee's artwork is so linked with Sheffield and his murals are wonderful. This is one of my favourites.



6. Clock mechanism, Green Lane Works
This is a photo of the clock mechanism in the Green Lane Works clock tower taken in 2009. It was taken during a programme of historic building recording, during the early days of my career as a buildings archaeologist. It is always exciting to find bits of historic machinery in old industrial buildings during these surveys. So much so that I stopped to take a photo on my personal camera.



7. Yellow Arch Studios, Burton Road
Yellow Arch Studios is best known as the birthplace of the Arctic Monkeys. Loads of other artists such as Richard Hawley, Pulp and Kylie Minogue have used the studios over the years.

8. Memories of Upperthorpe
I lived in Upperthorpe 1954-64, in a back-to-back slum property the kind that Dickens probably couldn't have imagined! We had one tiny room downstairs, a bedroom upstairs, and a misshapen attic where you couldn't stand up straight.

CONSULTATIONS WITH COMMUNITIES

Our consultations with local people began in June 2021. Working together, the team designed interactive consultation activities that created fun and inclusive opportunities for people to engage with the project. The team agreed that taking a creative approach to consultation could help to overcome some of the social disconnection experienced by the local community during the pandemic.

Engagement with the past is often a vital tool for building and strengthening communities. Studies in the UK heritage sector have shown that community-based archaeological activities increase levels of happiness, satisfaction, interest and social connectivity. However, access to these activities is not equitable across community groups, with people of colour more likely to miss out on the health and wellbeing benefits associated with this work.

To address this imbalance, the consultation team made use of Zest's pre-established links with community groups, inviting older people and people of colour to share memories that reflect the diverse histories and cultures of North Sheffield.

We made consultation activities more accessible to older people by using familiar local outdoor spaces like the Zest Gardens and the Ponderosa. Our activities included fun days where families followed self-guided heritage trails and created 'postcards' that captured their memories of their favourite places, as well as informal one-to-one and group conversations in the weekly 'tea tent'.

The Tea Tent

The consultation team found the tea tent to be the most effective method of community engagement. It acted as an inclusive space that brought heritage to the community, with the informal, outdoor setting leading to long conversations. The tea tent allowed us to listen to people's stories in-depth in their own spaces, taking a more respectful approach to consultation than short, extractive interviews. The tent changed locations throughout the project so that we could access different perspectives within North Sheffield.

Photographs

1. Playground enclosed by Edward Street Flats, c.1980-1999. Picture Sheffield image too843.
2. Historical photographs and postcards created by families at an activity day in June.
3. The Tea Tent.



What do you think of when you think of the history of Sheffield?

What is your favourite place in Sheffield and why?

Do you find Sheffield's past interesting?

Do you see your own history, community and culture around you?

Do you think learning about history could help with your health and happiness?
If so, how do you suggest this might happen?

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

OUR FINDINGS

PLACE-BASED HERITAGE

People talked about their memories of Sheffield in relation to specific places like the Castle Market, the Hole in the Road, and the Old Dam House restaurant in Crookes Valley Park. Our consultations have shown the immense importance of place-based activities for engaging with the past. Below are some of our key findings relating to this approach, offering summaries of the perspectives shared with our team.

- **We identified a sense of disconnection from museums.**

Museums take heritage out of place, and the people we spoke to felt that the stories told by local museums do not represent their own history, community, and culture. Individuals also identified the lack of translated information on display boards as a barrier to wider community engagement.

Museums are okay, but my main issue is the lack of permanent displays about diversity. For example, I helped work on a project there linked to the Yemini culture. This display was very good and up for a short while, but they are never permanent, always temporary – and we are not temporary, we are a permanent community in Sheffield and should be represented.



- **By contrast, place-based heritage is in demand.**

This disengagement from museums does not indicate a disconnection with the past. We have found a strong demand for activities that bring heritage closer to home through outdoor pop-up exhibitions, photo walks, and heritage trails. People want to make use of spaces like the bandstand at Weston Park, or the Edward Street Park, to hold exhibitions that give people the chance to interact with the past more creatively through oral history, food, music, and art.

History needs to not only be in a museum but also in our parks around us, for example the bandstand in Weston Park, my kids love that, but it's hardly ever used. Could places like that be used as pop-up locations for mini exhibitions?



- **Place-based heritage strengthens feelings of belonging to the local area.**

As the people we spoke to identified, this approach to engagement with the past helps them to feel more connected to their neighbourhoods in the present.

I think it's important to know more about where we live because this is now a part of our culture and a part of our history and where we come from now, so it would be nice to know more so it can feel like it belongs to us more.

Photographs

1 & 2. People are interested in historic photographs like these of Crookes Valley Park, showing the Old Dam House restaurant in 1952, and Sheffield Royal Infirmary on Infirmary Road, showing the Norfolk Wing and Outpatients' Building at the rear of the original block between 1900 and 1919. Picture Sheffield references: S288g2 and Arcoo09t.



OUTDOOR HERITAGE ACTIVITIES

Connected to place, we also identified a widespread preference for outdoor heritage activities. Creating more inclusive outdoor spaces for communities is a timely issue, with the COVID-19 pandemic having highlighted the importance of equitable access to outdoor amenities. Our consultations revealed that:

- **Outdoor spaces are viewed as more inclusive and welcoming.**

The accessibility, informality, and potential for socialising available in outdoor spaces makes them an asset to heritage engagement in the eyes of the local people we spoke to, especially relative to the traditional forms of indoor heritage displays currently on offer in the city.

Pop-up tents would be a wonderful way to have exhibitions – keep people outdoors but also sheltered. The open space is so much more inviting than the museum. A lot more welcoming, it allows you to connect with people and really helps to improve our health and wellbeing.

- **The outdoors are strongly associated with health and wellbeing benefits.**

As Historic England noted in the 2020 Heritage and Society Report: 'Experiencing outdoor historic places improves our mental health, reduces anxiety and increases our levels of happiness.' For the people of North Sheffield who engaged with this project, outdoor heritage activities could take the form of historic walking tours, picnics that explore the history of different culinary cultures, outdoor storytelling and memory sharing, and group trips to local sites of interest.

It's very important to get people out and moving so if history can help with this that would be a great idea – QR code trails are a good idea and other things such as finding a building and being able to hold your phone up and seeing what it used to look like.

Get the community outside and celebrating. We have this wonderful garden at Zest – it should be used more and by everyone. History and cultural celebrations could be a great way to do this.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORIES

We found that social and cultural histories are an excellent way of generating interest in the past. These also tend to be the types of histories that the people we spoke to do not currently find in stories about Sheffield.

- **Social and cultural histories add another dimension to the city's history beyond its industrial heritage.**
- **These histories align with the methods of heritage engagement preferred by the local people we consulted.**

Although we identified an interest in the people involved with industry, there is also a desire to hear other stories about the past.

[We should] show more history about the area before industry. I love period dramas so hearing about anything romantic before industry would be lovely as often Sheffield's history gets stuck in the industrial side of things.

- **There is a demand for more personal histories of Sheffield.**

The project's participants associated more personal stories of people in the city with making the past more relatable and less 'generic'. This approach would also help to highlight the historic strengths of North Sheffield's diverse local community.

I love the people in this area, they are beautiful, and my favourite memory. They are so kind, we are like a family here.



- **These histories could be used to emphasise the city's global connections.**

The people we spoke to want to hear more about patterns of migration, and how people around the world have contributed to the development of the city's culture, the NHS, and the manufacturing industry.

We need to look at the wider global connections of this area and the rest of the world. Museums need to show how our grandparents have contributed, how they were invited over to work and also how the women have contributed as well.

Photograph

The mural, now hidden by overgrown plants, outside the former Crookesmoor School on Oxford Street in 2006. Picture Sheffield references: To4776 and To4774.



ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

While the people we spoke to did not use the term 'archaeology', an interest in this came through in conversations about historical buildings, housing, bomb damage during the Second World War, and a more general desire to learn more about what areas looked like in the recent and distant past.

I would love it if we could see how places used to be, if we could see behind the walls of the closed factories and see what they look like now and then – but for this to be shown as we walk around the areas rather than on a display board. I am so curious to know what's boarded up behind some of these buildings.

I used to love the unusual features Sheffield has which it doesn't celebrate in my opinion. Like the Hole in the Road – that was great. It was an open space where people could go and socialise and get out of the rain and it had some amazing fish in there too.

We also heard suggestions about ways to make use of local historic buildings for indoor exhibitions, bringing heritage to the spaces of North Sheffield. The people we spoke to noted that this would allow them to interact with the archaeological heritage of their local area directly, rather than having to travel outside their neighbourhood to see their history.

Photographs

1. Old factories in Kelham Island, converted into flats. Image uploaded by a user of the Roots and Futures app.
2. The 'Hole in the Road' in Castle Square, Sheffield, created in 1967 and closed in 1994. Image: foundin_a_attic, Flickr.
3. Playground enclosed by Edward Street Flats, c.2000-2019. Picture Sheffield image u10437.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

By meaningfully engaging with the perspectives of local people, Roots and Futures makes the health and wellbeing benefits associated with place-based heritage more accessible to North Sheffield's diverse communities. We recognise that there are ongoing structural barriers to large-scale changes to heritage provision in the city, but we have some recommendations for making engagement with the past more accessible in the immediate future:

- Outdoor memory sharing through informal one-to-one and group conversations, especially using old photographs of the local area.
- Local pop-up photo exhibitions, information boards, and QR codes across local areas could highlight sites of historical interest like the infirmary hospital.
- Walking tours (guided and self-guided).
- Creating heritage groups unique to local areas, which could signpost people to further areas of study according to demand.

Photographs

1. Family photograph, uploaded by a user of the Roots and Futures app.
2. Cornish Place Works, Kelham Island. This was the first regeneration residence in Kelham Island, situated in a disused cutlery factory beside Ball Street Bridge. Image by Enchufla Con Clave, Wikipedia Commons.



OUR APPROACH TO PARTNERSHIP WORK

Roots and Futures is committed to building mutually beneficial relationships between the University and partner organisations. The project team has promoted a more equitable means of creating and sharing knowledge between partners through regular team meetings, collaborative online resources, and opportunities to shape the project's activities from design to evaluation.

The project team have shown a strong interest in working together in the future. We hope to continue to develop this relationship to create a legacy of collaboration between the University of Sheffield and local partners. By building on the community need identified in our work so far, we aim to create a shared heritage strategy that promotes the health and wellbeing of communities in North Sheffield.

'From the outset of being involved with this project, the collaboration between the partners has been wonderful. Each partner has had a voice which has been listened to and influenced the project greatly.'

Project partner feedback.

'I've found it really interesting...I would love to continue the relationships and explore other ways to collaborate in the future.'

Project partner feedback.

'I have found the collaborative co-construction of the app and project brilliant. The project group have a strong dynamic, and leading this group has been easy and natural. The regular meetings we have had (even when there was no business) have been vital to foster communication and a shared sense of understanding and direction for the project but to also build up a strong interpersonal relationship.'

Project partner feedback.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Working with heritage organisations

In August 2021, the digital Roots and Futures exhibition with Kelham Island Museum will open to share our findings with local people and visitors to the city. The exhibition explores the aspects of North Sheffield's past that are the most meaningful and interesting to the people who have interacted with Roots and Futures since Spring 2020. It showcases the photographs and stories uploaded to the Roots and Futures app, and the memories shared with the project team during consultation activities in Summer 2021.

The Museum's approach to the exhibition also follows our recommendations for heritage engagement. On the day that the exhibition is launched, the Museum will open its doors first to the members of local communities connected to Zest, creating a welcoming space for people to explore stories about their neighbourhoods' past. In the future, we hope to bring the exhibition outdoors using QR codes in local spaces like the Zest Gardens. This would offer local people the opportunity to interact with the exhibition beyond the museum itself, putting local stories and memories back into the places in which they are set and communities for whom they are meaningful.

The exhibition is a response to the suggestions of local people and represents the beginnings of a changing approach to heritage provision based on our work. It will be open throughout late Summer and Autumn 2021.

Working with local communities

Working together, the project partners have discovered a wealth of information about local preferences for heritage engagement. We have found a demand for more active and creative ways to interact with the past through arts and crafts, oral history, material culture, music, digital history trails, and activity days.

The importance of place-based social and cultural histories, and opportunities for outdoor memory sharing, have come across strongly in our conversations with members of local communities. We have heard calls for the use of local spaces like the Zest Gardens and the bandstand at Weston Park to tell personalised stories about the history of communities in North Sheffield and their connections with different places around the world.



We know that engagement with the Roots and Futures project has already begun to bring health and wellbeing benefits to the residents of Netherthorpe, Upperthorpe, Kelham Island and Neepsend. We hope to build on the findings of this report to make these benefits accessible to all members of North Sheffield's communities. Looking ahead, we will continue to champion more diverse and interactive approaches to place-based heritage, informed directly by the perspectives of local people.

Photographs

1. A community member shares her Henna art with Alison (Zest) at the Eid celebrations on the Ponderosa
2. #Kurbart at Little Kelham, uploaded by a user of the Roots and Futures app.



With special thanks to the community participants whose stories and insight helped us to develop this project.

This report was written by Isabelle Carter.

The Roots and Futures project team are: Lizzy Craig-Atkins, Nahed Arafat, Cait Scott, Lamia Sassine and Isabelle Carter (Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield); Courtenay Crichton-Turley (Ecus); David McNeil, Alison Somerset-Ward (Zest); Cheryl Bowen (Kelham Island Museum); Ben McGarry (KINCA); Natasha Bramall (Wessex Archaeology) and Jonathan Bradley, Alex Mason (Arts and Humanities Knowledge Exchange, University of Sheffield).